



Bí Cineálta Policy

September 2026 (1.1)



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Óige
Department of Education
and Youth



Version	Date	Description	Authors
1.0	June, 2025	First Version of Policy	Board of Management
1.1	September, 2026	- Addition of Table of Contents/ Sections - Section 3 - Supervision: Addition of: <i>Supervision begins at 9:00am when the school bell rings.</i> - Section 6: Appendix A: Addition of posters for specified class levels. - Section 7: Appendix B: Addition of whole-school child friendly poster. - Section 9: Appendix D: New Addition to support school staff.	Board of Management

Mercy Convent Primary, Nás na Ríogh **Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour**

The Board of Management of Mercy Convent Primary adopted the following policy in June 2025 to prevent and address bullying behaviour and was reviewed in June 2026. This policy fully complies with the requirements of *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2024*.

The board of management acknowledges that bullying behaviour interferes with the rights of the child as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We all, as a school community, have a responsibility to work together to prevent and address bullying behaviour and to deal with the negative impact of bullying behaviour.

We are committed to ensuring that all pupils who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our pupils is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our pupils and we are fully committed to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

We confirm that we will, in accordance with our obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

Catholic schools have a distinctive understanding of the human person, recognising that every person is created in God's image and likeness and has inherent dignity as a child of God. This is the basis for ensuring that everybody in our school is treated with respect and care, in accordance with the Catholic Schedule.

As a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual. No human person is to be devalued and everybody has a part to play in the school community, regardless of difference."

Contents

1. Definition of bullying.....	5
2. Section A: Development/review of our Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.....	6
3. Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour	7
4. Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour.....	11
5. Section D: Oversight	16
6. Appendix A	17
7. Appendix B.....	20
8. Appendix C.....	21
9. Appendix D	23

1. Definition of bullying

Bullying is defined in *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying* and *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* as

- Targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm.
- The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature can have lasting effects on the child experiencing the behaviour.
- Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.
- The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

Bullying behaviour can take many forms, which can occur separately or together. These can include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- **Physical bullying behaviour:** Includes pushing, shoving, pinching, kicking, tripping pupils, “mess fights” and the destruction of personal property.
- **Verbal bullying behaviour:** Continual name-calling directed at a pupil which hurts, insults or humiliates the pupil.
- **Written bullying behaviour:** includes writing insulting remarks about a pupil in public areas, passing around notes about or drawings of a pupil
- **Extortion:** where something is obtained through force or threats
- **Exclusion:** A pupil is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by a pupil or group of pupils.
- **Relational:** Occurs when a pupil attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined.
- **Online bullying behaviour:** Online bullying behaviour (cyber bullying) is carried out through the use of technologies such as text or direct messaging/ instant messaging, social media platforms, email apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms and other online technologies.

Each school is required to develop and implement a Bí Cineálta policy that sets out how the school community prevents and addresses bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the school’s Code of Behaviour.

2. Section A: Development/review of our Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

All members of our school community were provided with the opportunity to input into the development/review of this policy.

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	14-03-2025	Half Day closure/ staff survey
	27-04-2026	Discussion at staff meeting
Students	12-03-2025	Surveyed pupils from 3 rd to 6 th class
Parents	12-03-2025	Survey to all parents/ guardians
Board of Management	18-06-2025	BOM Meeting
	02-09-2026	Review at ratification at September Meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	19-06-2025	Published on school website
	04-09-2026	Review published on school website
Date policy was approved: 18 June 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: 02 September 2026		

3. Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by the school. These include strategies specifically aimed at preventing online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

In developing the preventative strategies which our school will use to prevent all forms of bullying behaviour, we come from the context of our Catholic ethos, where inclusivity permeates our school in a real way.

Our school takes positive steps to ensure that the culture of the school is one which welcomes a respectful dialogue and encounter with diversity and difference by ensuring that prevention and inclusivity strategies are given priority and discussed regularly at our board of management and staff meetings

Culture and Environment

- Mercy Convent Primary encourages a *“telling environment”* where children feel safe to share concerns.
- The school maintains *safe and inclusive physical spaces* that foster a sense of belonging.
- Our school values – *Manners, Equality, Resilience, Creativity and Empathy* are promoted through artwork, displays and signage.
- There is a strong focus on *adequate supervision* and a range of *organised activities during break times* to ensure pupil safety and engagement.
- The school maintains an *inclusive environment* where all pupils are supported regardless of their background.
- Mercy Convent Primary is conscious that pupils from diverse backgrounds may face prejudice or discrimination, which is proactively addressed through initiatives, religious education, and the SPHE policy.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with additional needs and/or differences.

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

- The *SPHE* and *RSE* curricula are implemented to support pupil well-being and belonging.
- The school encourages *collaborative and respectful learning environments* that value all voices.

- Mercy Convent Primary teaches *digital literacy and internet safety* as part of the SPHE curriculum.
- In younger classes, picture/story books can be used to teach important concepts (e.g., Amazing Grace considers gender & race through story etc.)
- Organise seminars/workshops given by relevant professionals to older pupils and to parents/guardians, focusing on educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while online and also on developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying. The school-wide approach and the role of parents is of great importance in this regard.
- *Split-level internet filtering* is in place and pupils are educated on appropriate technology use to prevent online bullying.

Policy and Planning

- Differentiated, age-appropriate versions are displayed in classrooms to support pupils' understanding of the policy. *See Appendix A.*
- A whole-school child-friendly Bí Cineálta poster has also been developed and is displayed on all stairwells 1, 2, and 3 and on the infant corridor, next to "Clós na Scoile". It is also displayed on the school's digital screens to ensure it is visible and accessible to the entire school community. *See Appendix B*
- The school, in collaboration with pupils and parents, *develops, implements, and reviews policies and plans* to prevent and respond to bullying behaviour.
- Bullying prevention and response are embedded within the *SPHE policy, Code of Behaviour and Acceptable Use Policy*.
- The school uses a *whole-school approach* to ensure alignment with the *Bí Cineálta* procedures and national legislation.

Relationships and Partnerships

- The school supports the *active participation of pupils and parents* in all aspects of school life. Interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as our Parents' Association and our student council, committees and groups.
- Mercy Convent Primary promotes *positive relationships* among all members of the school community.
- Catch the children being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Encouraging peer mentoring and peer support:
 - Yard Buddies
 - Buddy Reading and other activities between older and younger classes.
- At assemblies, school rules are reinforced on a regular basis. Raise awareness of the definition of bullying behaviour and how the school deals with such behaviour.

- *Parents are informed and involved* in promoting safe technology use at home and school.
- Strong links are maintained with *external agencies* and services where appropriate to support anti-bullying strategies and inclusive education.

The dignity and the wellbeing of the individual person is of paramount concern in our Christian response. Our school will listen closely to and dialogue with parents, thereby building a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence.

In continuing to develop prevention strategies, our school will listen to young people and parents, to help establish their particular context and needs. Frequent periods of reflection and further engagement by the school, young people and parents, will be used to discern appropriate supports for young people in this school and to help inform future prevention strategies

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

The relevant supervision and monitoring policies are as follows:

- **Classroom Supervision:** Teachers ensure that pupils are well supervised within the classroom.
- **Playground/Outdoor Supervision:** SNAs and teachers are stationed at strategic locations around the playground to monitor pupil interactions.
- **Playground Helpers:** 6th class pupils will play an important role in displaying responsible behaviour and will guide children during transition periods. (yard/assembly)
- **Hallways and Common Areas:** Teachers, SET, office staff and the principal/deputy principal are present in hallways during high-traffic times to observe pupil behaviour.
- Supervision begins when the school bell rings at 9:00am.
- Extra supervision is provided on school tours and school outings.
- Visitors to the school should be supervised at all times.

The following school policies, plans and procedures have a bearing on this Bí Cineálta Policy:

- Yard Supervision Rota
- Code of Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Statement & Risk Assessment
- SPHE Policy

- Uniform Policy
- Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- School Tours Policy
- Substance Use Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Health, Safety and Welfare Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy

4. Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is/are as follows:

- The class teacher will oversee the recording of bullying reports for pupils in their class – this includes using the procedure guidelines to investigate reports of bullying and recording bullying behaviour on the correct form on Aladdin. **The class teacher is the first point of contact.**
- The principal/deputy principal will follow up with the class teacher after twenty days to investigate if bullying has ceased.
- All staff will be vigilant to bullying behaviour.
- Principal will inform Board of Management of incidences of bullying.
- Assistant Principal II Bí Cineálta Policy co-ordinator is available to provide up to date information and supports if needed to assist class teachers in addressing concerns.
- Appendix D was created to support school staff further.

When bullying occurs, the school will:

- ensure that the pupil experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured
- seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- consider the age and ability of those involved
- listen to the views of the pupil who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- take action in a timely manner
- inform parents of those involved

The steps that will be taken by the school to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred, the approaches taken to address the bullying behaviour and to review progress are as follows (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred:

- When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred, the teacher should consider the following: what, where, when, who, why?
- If a group of pupils are involved, each pupil is engaged with individually at first. Thereafter, all pupils involved should be met as a group.
- At the group meeting, each pupil will be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that each member of the group is clear about each other's views.
- Pupils may be asked to give a written account of what happened.
- Each pupil will be supported following the group meeting.
- The definition of bullying sets out clear criteria to help determine if bullying behaviour has occurred:
'Bullying is targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society'
- Incidents which are not deemed as bullying behaviour are dealt with within the school's code of behaviour.
- Where a child with additional needs has engaged in hurtful behaviour on a continuous basis, Mercy Convent Primary will review each case individually as per the child's Behaviour Plan. This plan has been directed by the school's Code of Behaviour.

Where bullying behaviour has occurred:

- School staff need to be fair and consistent in their approach to address bullying behaviour.
- Ensure that the pupil who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the pupil who is displaying bullying behaviour receive support.
- Ensure that the pupil experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured.
- Seek to ensure where possible the privacy of those involved.
- Conduct all conversations with sensitivity.
- Consider the age and ability of those involved.
- Listen to the views of the pupil who is experiencing bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation.
- Take action in a timely manner.
- Inform parents of those involved. (Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved must be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to consult with them on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour as outlined in the school's Bí Cineálta policy.)

Requests to take no action:

- If a pupil reports bullying but asks staff not to take action beyond "looking out" for them, they may fear being identified or making things worse. In such cases, staff should respond with empathy, handle the issue sensitively and work with the pupil to decide on appropriate steps and how to involve parents. Ensuring the pupil feels safe is the priority.
- Parents may inform the school of bullying and request no action be taken. This request should be made in writing or supported if literacy or language barriers exist. However, the school may still decide to act based on the situation.

Determining if Bullying Behaviour has ceased:

Progress Review Timeline:

- The teacher must meet with pupils and parents involved within 20 school days of the initial intervention to review progress.

Key Factors to Review:

- The nature and seriousness of the bullying behaviour
- How effective the strategies used so far have been
- The current relationship between the pupils involved

Ongoing Support:

- Even if the bullying has stopped, both pupils (the one bullied and the one displaying the behaviour) may still need support and monitoring.
- It may take time for relationships to improve and for interventions to take full effect.
- In some cases, relationships may not return to how they were before the bullying occurred.

If Bullying Persists:

- The teacher should re-evaluate the strategies used with input from pupils and parents.
- Agree on a new plan and timeframe for further review meetings until the behaviour stops.

Escalation Measures:

- If the bullying continues, the school may implement strategies outlined in the Code of Behaviour.
- If disciplinary action is required, it will be managed between the school, the pupil displaying the behaviour and their parents.

Recording bullying behaviour:

- All incidents of bullying behaviour should be recorded (see Appendix C).
- These records will be retained in accordance with our school's data retention policy and in line with data protection regulations.
- Where a Student Support File exists for a pupil, the school will place a copy of the record on the pupil's support file as this will assist the special education team in providing a consistent and holistic response to support the wellbeing of the pupils involved.

Complaint Process:

- If a parent is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with these procedures, parents will be referred to the school's complaints procedure.
- Additional Information relating to schools' complaint procedures are available at the following link:
<https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/parental-complaints/>
- In the event that a pupil and/or parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, a pupil and/or parent may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions have had a negative effect on the pupil.
- The Office of the Ombudsman for Children can be contacted at ococomplaint@oco.ie.

The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one intervention/support programme works in all situations.

Supporting Pupils Who Have Been Bullied:

- The first priority is to stop the bullying behaviour.
- Promote a culture of respect for all pupils, especially those who have been targeted.
- Encourage empathy and peer support for bullied pupils.
- Reinforce that bullying is never the fault of the targeted pupil through awareness-raising initiatives.
- Act quickly to identify and address bullying behaviours, demonstrating that the victim is not to blame.
- Where possible and subject to available resources, offer timely access to emotional support.
- Support self-esteem and social development by encouraging participation in group work, classroom collaboration and extracurricular activities to build friendships and confidence.

Supporting Pupils Who Have Displayed Bullying Behaviour:

- Emphasise that pupils who change their behaviour are not punished indefinitely and are given a fresh start.
- Recognise and affirm efforts made by pupils to reform, highlighting that choosing to change is responsible and commendable.

- Encourage involvement in social and group activities that promote positive peer interactions and build social skills.
- Use school-wide strategies to build self-esteem and promote inclusion across the curriculum.
- Guide teachers and parents to address the inappropriate behaviour while maintaining support for the child.
- Aim for resolution by offering pupils the opportunity to make amends and start anew, based on a genuine commitment to change and a promise to reform.
- Revisit Section B of this policy.
- Access supports such as NEPS, Oide, Webwise, NPC, DCU Anti-Bullying Centre, Túsla where deemed necessary.

All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with pupils and parents. The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented. If the bullying behaviour is a child protection concern the matter will be addressed without delay in accordance with *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

5. Section D: Oversight

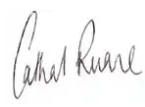
The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting. This update will include the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting, the number of ongoing incidents and the total number of incidents since the beginning of the school year. Where incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred, the principal will also provide a verbal update which will include where relevant, information relating to trends and patterns identified, strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant. This update does not contain personal or identifying information. See Chapter 7 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

This policy is available to our school community on the school's website and in hard copy on request. A pupil friendly version of this policy is displayed in the school and is also available on our website and in hard copy on request.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed, following input from our school community, each calendar year or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this policy refers.

This policy was ratified by Board of Management on **2nd September 2026.**

Signed: 
(Chairperson of the Board of Management)

Signed: 
(Principal)

Date: 2/09/2026

Date: 2/09/2026

Date of next review: September 2027

6. Appendix A

Junior Infants & Senior Infants



1st & 2nd Class



Bí Cineálta! Be Kind

What is Bí Cineálta?

Bí Cineálta means "Be Kind" in Irish. It is a special rule that helps make sure everyone in school feels safe, happy and respected.



1. Be Kind to Everyone

- Use kind words and actions.
- Include others in games and activities.
- Help people who are feeling sad or left out.



2. Tell an Adult

If someone is being unkind or bullying, tell a teacher or one trusted adult. You are helping someone and keeping people safe.



3. Work Together

Teachers, parents, and pupils all work together to make school a kind and safe place.



4. Kindness Every Day

Being kind isn't just for one day. We try to be kind every day in everything we do.

Remember: Kindness is powerful. Your school is a team – and you are an important part of making it a safe, happy place!

3rd – 6th Class

Bí Cineálta!



Choose kindness

What is bullying?

Bullying behaviour is when someone keeps being mean or hurtful to others on purpose over and over again.

Get help!

If you think that you are being bullied or someone else is being bullied, you need to tell a teacher or another adult that you trust. They will know what to do to help.

Tell someone!

If a student tells a staff member that they think they are being bullied, we will:

- talk with the student
- ask the student what they want to happen
- work out a plan together
- talk with the other student's parents
- talk to their parents talk to the other student(s) involved

Review

We look at this policy every year to see what is working well or what could work better. We will ask you what you think.



7. Appendix B



Bí Cineálta! Be Kind!



Please tell someone if you think that you are being bullied or someone else is being bullied.

8. Appendix C

Template for recording bullying behaviour

Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

Who reported the alleged bullying

Date reported

Location of incidents

Form of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es))

Physical bullying behaviour	Verbal bullying behaviour	Written bullying behaviour
Extortion	Exclusion	Relational
Online bullying behaviour		

Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es))

disablist bullying behaviour	exceptionally able bullying	gender identity bullying
Cyber-Bullying	Intimidation	Racial
Poverty bullying	Religious identity bullying	Relational
Sexist bullying	Homophobic/transphobic bullying (LGBTQ+)	Sexual harassment

Brief Description of the bullying behaviour

Is this behaviour deemed bullying (*circle*)

YES	NO
-----	----

Agreed Actions to be taken (views of the pupil and their parents should be included)

--

Review Date (where applicable) _____

Signed (Responsible Teacher): _____ Date _____

9. Appendix D

